

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELGRA 04128 201646Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00
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SY-05 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 PA-02 USIA-15
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P R 201325Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1092
INFO AMEMBASSY SOFIA

UNCLAS BELGRADE 4128

DEPARTMENT PASS FAA

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: EAIR YO BU
SUBJ: CIVAIR: HIJACKING OF BULGARIAN AIRCRAFT TO YUGOSLAVIA

1. FOLLOWING REPORT OF HIJACKING OF "BALKAN" AIRLINES AIRCRAFT AN-24 ON FLIGHT FROM VIDIN TO SOFIA EVENING OF 18 JUNE BASED ON YUGOSLAV MEDIA REPORTS. AS WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION FROM YUGOSLAV CIVIL AVIATION OFFICIALS, WE WILL ADVISE DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY SOFIA.

2. AIRCRAFT LANDED AT BELGRADE AIRPORT ABOUT 2130 HOURS JUN 18 AFTER HAVING BEEN HIJACKED BY BULGARIAN PASSENGER USING PISTOL WHICH HE HAD TAKEN FROM HIS FATHER WHO IS MEMBER BULGARIAN MILITIA. HIJACKER, IDENTIFIED AS RUMEN TSANKOV DIMITROV, 22

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AUTO MECHANIC FROM LOM, HAD DEMANDED CAPTAIN FLY AIRCRAFT TO MUNICH OR LONDON BUT CAPTAIN CONVINCED HIJACKER PLANE NEED TO LAND IN BELGRADE FOR FUEL. WHILE PLANE ON GROUND AND WHILE HIJACKER REQUESTING IT BE REFUELED FOR TAKEOFF TO WESTERN EUROPE, CAPTAIN URGED DIMITROV TO GIVE HIMSELF UP AND SEEK ASYLUM IN YUGOSLAVIA. ABOUT TWO AND ONE-HALF HOURS AFTER PLANE LANDED, OFFICIALS OF
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YUGOSLAV SECRETARIAT FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS, WHO HAD BOARDED THE PLANE WEARING UNIFORMS OF YUGOSLAV AIRLINE " JAT", SUCCEEDED IN DISARMING DIMITROV AND TAKING HIM INTO CUSTODY. ONE NEWS ACCOUNT QUOTES DIMITROV AS SAYING HE GAVE UP VOLUNTARILY. ALL 45 PASSENGERS AND 4 CREW MEMBERS, ALL OF WHOM BULGARIAN CITIZENS, WERE UNHARMED AND RETURNED TO SOFIA WITH AIRCRAFT IN EARLY MORNING HOURS 19 JUNE.

3. DIMITROV IS IN INVESTIGATIVE CUSTODY IN BELGRADE AND ON JUN 19 WAS BROUGHT BEFORE EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. YUGOSLAV MEDIA POINT OUT THAT UNDER INTERNATIONAL TREATIES WHICH YUGOSLAVIA HAS SIGNED, YUGOSLAVIA MAY EITHER TRY DIMITROV OR EXTRADITE HIM TO BULGARIA. MEDIA NOTE THAT BULGARIANS HAVE REQUESTED EXTRADITION.

4. FROM THE TIME THE BELGRADE CONTROL TOWER HEARD OF THE HIJACKING AND THAT THE PLANE WAS COMING TO BELGRADE UNTIL THE HIJACKER WAS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY, BELGRADE AIRPORT WAS CLOSED AND NO PLANES EITHER LANDED OR TOOK OFF. FEDERAL SECRETARY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS, GENERAL FRANJO HERLJEVIC, PERSONALLY WENT TO AIRPORT DURING THE INCIDENT.

5. DIMITROV QUOTED IN PRESS AS STATING THAT DURING PRE-FLIGHT SECURITY CHECK IN VIDIN ONLY HIS UPPER BODY WAS SEARCHED AND THAT HE HAD CONCEALED PISTOL ON LOWER PORTION OF HIS BODY. EAGLEBURGER

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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